

under the horrendous brutality of the Saddam Hussein dictatorship are suffering even more today. We are looking at a nation in the process of disintegration. That is Iraq today. There are estimates that hundreds of thousands of Iraqis have been killed—some estimates go as high as 500,000—and almost 2 million Iraqis have fled their own country. In fact, anyone in Iraq who has any money at all, anyone who is part of the middle class, is trying to get out of that country as quickly as possible, and about 8 percent of Iraqis have had to flee their own country.

As I speak, President Bush is returning from a trip to Latin America. Wherever he spoke, he encountered massive protests. In country after country he discovered that people in Latin America hold our Nation in extremely low esteem, largely because of his ill-advised decision to invade Iraq and the disastrous way in which the Iraq occupation has been managed. That is certainly true not just in Latin America, it is true all over the world. How are we, as the most powerful military force in the world, going to be able to lead the world in the very important fight against international terrorism and Islamic extremism when in country after country leaders do not want to identify with us because of the policies of the President of the United States.

In the days immediately following 9/11, the world rallied around the United States when we were grievously attacked; not just leaders but the huge majority of people in nations all over the world expressed their support and expressed their concern for the United States. They were on our side, not just for reasons of compassion but understanding that we had to work together as a planet, as a civilized world in addressing the attacks of extremists and fundamentalists and terrorists. We had to work together and the United States was prepared to play a leadership role.

Tragically, that reality is no longer the case. We are now held in lower esteem internationally than ever before in the modern history of America. That is not just a bad thing in the sense of our young people going to Europe and finding out they are not respected or that our country is not respected, it is a bad thing if we are serious about trying to develop an international consensus to fight the very serious problem of international terrorism.

Tragically, the Bush administration has refused to listen to the American people who, in the national election this past November, made it very clear they want a new direction in Iraq and they want this war wound down. They did not vote for an escalation in this war, they voted to wind down the war. This administration has not only not listened to the American people, they have refused to listen to the thoughtful suggestions of the bipartisan Iraq Study Group. This administration has refused to listen to the advice of our military leaders in Iraq who have told

us that increasing troops from the United States would make it easier for the Iraqi Government and military to avoid their political and military responsibilities: Why make the hard political decisions? Why make the hard financial decisions? You don't have to do that. Uncle Sam is there to provide you with the troops. The American taxpayer is there to provide you with the money. You don't have to make those choices.

This administration has not only refused to listen to the American people, to our military, to the Iraq Study Group, perhaps most importantly they have refused to listen to the Iraqi people themselves who, according to a number of polls, tell us very strongly they believe that in the midst of all of the chaos, all of the horror that is taking place in their country, they would be more safe, they would be more secure if our troops left their country.

If President Bush will not listen to anybody, including the American people, including former generals, including the Iraq Study Group, including international public opinion, then it is up to Congress to tell him it is time to move in a new direction in Iraq. In the 2006 elections, in my view, the people of Vermont and of this Nation told us they wanted Congress to begin asserting its constitutional authority over this war and that they wanted us to rein in this administration. Most important, they told us they wanted us to begin the process of bringing our troops home as soon as possible. As a Vermont Senator, that is exactly the effort I intend to make. We must bring our troops home instead of leaving them to be embattled referees of a civil war that only the Iraqis—not our brave soldiers—can stop.

Iraq's Government and its military must step up and accept their political and military responsibilities. As the Baker-Hamilton commission said, that will only happen when we insist that the Iraqis and not American troops are responsible for the future of Iraq.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SANDERS. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO SERGEANT CHARLES "CC" JOHNSON

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to congratulate Charles Curtis John-

son, or "CC" as he is known to friends, on his retirement from the U.S. Capitol Police after nearly 32 years of dedicated service.

Sergeant Johnson started his career with the Capitol Police in 1974. For more than 14 years, he performed a variety of law enforcement duties as a member of the Capitol Division. In 1992, Mr. Johnson was named administrative sergeant and started working with the First Responder Unit that protects the Capitol grounds. By 1998, Mr. Johnson was promoted to sergeant and supervised the officers that protect the House and Senate Chambers.

In 2004, Sergeant Johnson earned a post as one of the supervisors of the Horse Mounted Unit. This elite unit is well known for its rigorous training requirements, and Sergeant Johnson passed these tests with ease. After his work on the Horse Mounted Unit, Sergeant Johnson was promoted to the Patrol/Mobile Response Division. He served there until his retirement, marking a long career of dedication to the Capitol Police Force.

Sergeant Johnson is also the devoted husband of a fellow Capitol Police officer, Captain Shirley Jo Johnson. Together, they have raised four children, and are the proud grandparents of four grandchildren. There is no doubt that his family can be proud of his example of professionalism and sense of duty to others.

As Senate majority leader, and a former Capitol Police officer, I have the greatest respect for the fine men and women of the Capitol Police Force. Sergeant Johnson embodies all of the qualities that make the Capitol Police one of the best law enforcement divisions in the Nation. I am pleased to recognize Sergeant Johnson today before the Senate, and I wish him the best as he embarks on this new chapter of his life.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

U.S. ARMY SPECIALIST JUSTIN ALLAN ROLLINS

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I rise today to pay special tribute to U.S. Army SPC Justin Allan Rollins, of Newport, NH. Tragically, on March 5, 2007, this courageous 22-year-old soldier, along with five of his soldier comrades, gave their last full measure for our Nation when an improvised explosive device detonated near their unit during combat operations in Samarra, Iraq. At the time of this hostile action, Specialist Rollins, the gunner on his HMMWV, was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, NC, and was serving in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He had recently reenlisted in the Army for an additional 4 years.

Justin, the son of Mitchel "Skip" and Rhonda Rollins, was born on November 10, 1984, and had resided in Newport, NH, all of his life. He was a 2003 graduate of Newport High School